Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare

2021
Shakespeare et les acteurs

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Electronic version
URL: https://journals.openedition.org/shakespeare/5993
DOI: 10.4000/shakespeare.5993
ISSN: 2271-6424

Publisher
Société Française Shakespeare

Electronic reference
Arlynda Boyer, "Actors' Annotations and Paradoxical Editions of Shakespeare's Texts", *Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare* [Online], | 2021, Online since 28 May 2021, connection on 16 June 2021. URL: http://journals.openedition.org/shakespeare/5993 ; DOI: https://doi.org/10.4000/shakespeare.5993

Actors' Annotations and Paradoxical Editions of Shakespeare's Texts

Arlynda Boyer

1 Paul Menzer once proposed a thought experiment: "What does a performance look like that aspires to permanence? What does an edition look like that aspires to ephemerality?"[1] I will propose my own answer to his questions, but for now I would simply ask you to hold that thought experiment in your mind.

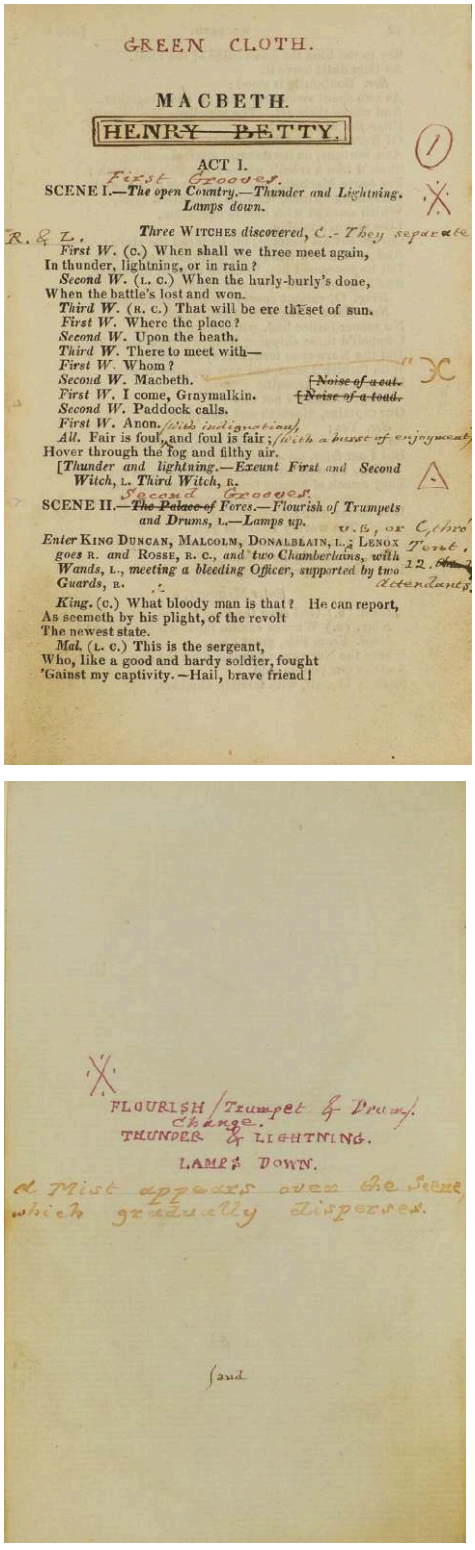
2 Modern theatre generates a great mass of textual material never intended for publication or even necessarily for preservation: notebooks belonging to directors, dramaturgs, and stage managers; individual scripts for every actor; rehearsal diaries and preparation notebooks kept by some actors; costume department notes; props lists; music lists; fight choreography notes; and more. Each type of text serves an important function; all are necessary for a successful production; and all provide context for one another. This material is hidden, not only from the final staged performance but also from academic publication or study, left out of the textual history of a play. These are the texts that *make* the performances, and yet relatively few scholars work extensively with them. Where there has been a focus on playhouse documents, the focus has been on the few surviving early modern documents, not on the large amount of textual material originating with modern practitioners.[2]

3 There are several early modern indications that printed texts and performed plays were not the same: Richard Jones, the printer of *Tamburlaine,* removed the "fond and friuolous Iestures"[3] of a clown's part, while the printer of Beaumont and Fletcher's folio proudly announced that purchasers of his book held in their hands "All that was *Acted*, and all that was not," specifically passages and scenes that had been omitted by actors in staging.[4] The words printed and the words acted have never been identical to one another. This means that the working documents of theatre's backstage – especially creative documents such as actors' scripts – comprise *theatre's* textual history, a largely unexamined, and woefully under-preserved, textual history of four centuries of performance, as its practitioners created it (as opposed to how audiences received it), a completely *different* textual history, and one that I believe ought to be preserved and

studied. I also want to suggest that these documents deserve preservation and attention particularly for their unique and illuminating marginalia, annotation being an integral part of their textual history and an integral part of the work of theatre practitioners. Ultimately, I want to lay some opening groundwork that might allow scholars to consider how theatre's textual history (the creative work done *on* and *to* the text by directors, actors, and other practitioners) intersects with, complicates, and deepens traditional textual history (which might be described as the creative work done on and to the text by printers, scholars, and editors). What would an editorial paradigm look like that incorporated *both* types of textual history?

4 First, it is important to understand the several types of backstage textual materials, all visually distinct from one another and all performing a different purpose. To broadly generalize, stage management texts concern themselves with the movements of multiple actors and the technical details of lights, scenery, music and sound effects, most particularly how and when to deploy such things as scenery changes, curtains, and music – that is, the purpose of a stage management text is to record nearly every *non-acting, non-directing* element of a production. Directors' texts focus on the traits and interplay of characters and on the scenic effects desired, with much less concern about the precise mechanics of achieving them. Lastly, actors' texts focus far more narrowly on only the character(s) an actor is portraying and on those who directly affect their character, include annotations that bring the style of playing more vividly to life, and do not focus at all on technical details.

5 The Folger Shakespeare Library holds what it terms a rehearsal copy of *Macbeth* from 1875, marked by actor Marcus Moriarty for the small roles of Ross and Lennox. However, the book that Moriarty marked up was actually a much older stage management book for a production starring the young phenomenon Master Henry Betty as Macbeth, which places the book's original creation between 1804 and 1808. This spread from the opening of the play shows the concerns of a late 17th / early 18th-century stage manager, noting scenery grooves, music, lamp lighting, sound effects of thunder, and a gradually clearing mist, but nothing about acting interpretation or the important relationship between Macbeth and the witches. The different inks and hands suggest that this book was used more than once, possibly for multiple productions, although the stage manager's hand appears to be the same even in different inks (note the lower-case 'g' and 'h' in the plum and sepia inks). This sort of palimpsest is extremely common – indeed the norm – among pre-1900 backstage texts, with books passing from production to production, function to function, and person to person, sometimes for decades at a time (although this is less true today, when individual copies are affordable and expected).


GREEN CLOTH.

MACBETH.

HENRY BETTY.

ACT I.

First Grooves.

SCENE I.—*The open Country.—Thunder and Lightning. Lamps down.*

R. & L.

Three WITCHES *discovered, C.- They separate*

First W. (C.) When shall we three meet again,
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?
Second W. (L. C.) When the hurly-burly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.
Third W. (R. C.) That will be ere the set of sun.
First W. Where the place?
Second W. Upon the heath.
Third W. There to meet with—
First W. Whom?
Second W. Macbeth. ~~[Noise of a cat.~~
First W. I come, Graymalkin. ~~[Noise of a toad.~~
Second W. Paddock calls.
First W. Anon. *[with indignation]*
All. Fair is foul, and foul is fair; *[with a burst of enjoyment]*
Hover through the fog and filthy air.
[*Thunder and lightning.—Exeunt First and Second Witch,* L. *Third Witch,* R.

Second Grooves.

SCENE II.—~~*The Palace of*~~ *Fores.—Flourish of Trumpets and Drums,* L.—*Lamps up.*

v. s, or Cyhro' Tent, 12. Attendants

Enter KING DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBLAIN, L.; LENOX *goes* R. *and* ROSSE, R. C., *and two Chamberlains, with Wands,* L., *meeting a bleeding Officer, supported by two Guards,* R.

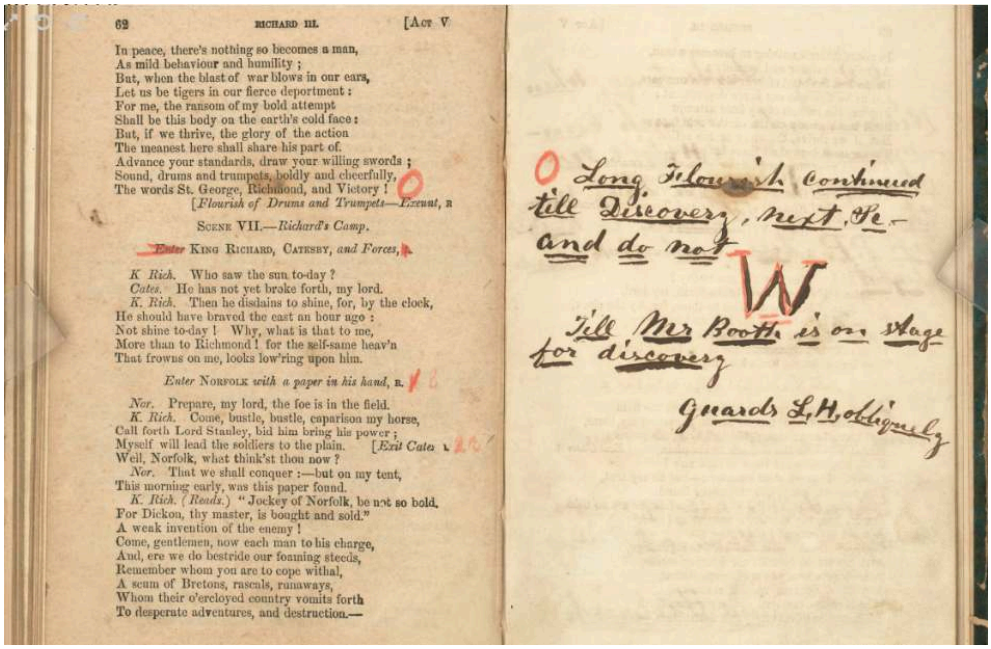
King. (C.) What bloody man is that? He can report,
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
The newest state.
Mal. (L. C.) This is the sergeant,
Who, like a good and hardy soldier, fought
'Gainst my captivity.—Hail, brave friend!

FLOURISH / Trumpet & Drums.
Change.
THUNDER & LIGHTNING.
LAMPS DOWN.
A Mist appears over the Scene which gradually disperses.
Sand

Fig. 1. *Macbeth* [Rehearsal Copy]. At: Place: Folger Shakespeare Library. Mac 30. Available through: Adam Matthew, Marlborough, Shakespeare in Performance: Prompt Books from the Folger Shakespeare Library, http://www.shakespeareinperformance.amdigital.co.uk.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/Documents/Details/FSL_MACBETH_Mac_30 [Accessed May 01, 2020].

6 In 2018, the Hidden Room Theatre presented a historical re-creation of *Richard III* based on what was described as John Wilkes Booth's promptbook (ca. 1861-1864). But if Booth

wrote any of the annotations, he wrote them in the capacity of a stage manager, not that of an actor or director.[5] The annotations entirely concern stage management, such as large "W"s and a faint "RMB," standing for "whistle" (for a scene change) and "ring music bell." Other notes involve blocking for multiple actors – again a function of stage management rather than the concern of a single actor – and the usual cuts to Shakespeare's text common to 19th-century production texts. Booth was a touring star, traveling from city to city performing with the help of a supporting cast of local stock actors, whom he'd met only a few days before opening each show. So it is likely that he created and traveled with his own stage management book, and even plausible that he might have referred to himself in the third person, as here:


62 RICHARD III. [ACT V

In peace, there's nothing so becomes a man,
As mild behaviour and humility;
But, when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Let us be tigers in our fierce deportment:
For me, the ransom of my bold attempt
Shall be this body on the earth's cold face:
But, if we thrive, the glory of the action
The meanest here shall share his part of.
Advance your standards, draw your willing swords;
Sound, drums and trumpets, boldly and cheerfully,
The words St. George, Richmond, and Victory!
[*Flourish of Drums and Trumpets—Exeunt*, R

SCENE VII.—*Richard's Camp.*

Enter KING RICHARD, CATESBY, *and Forces*, L.

K. Rich. Who saw the sun to-day?
Cates. He has not yet broke forth, my lord.
K. Rich. Then he disdains to shine, for, by the clock,
He should have braved the east an hour ago:
Not shine to-day! Why, what is that to me,
More than to Richmond? for the self-same heav'n
That frowns on me, looks low'ring upon him.

Enter NORFOLK *with a paper in his hand*, R.

Nor. Prepare, my lord, the foe is in the field.
K. Rich. Come, bustle, bustle, caparison my horse,
Call forth Lord Stanley, bid him bring his power;
Myself will lead the soldiers to the plain. [*Exit Cates.*
Well, Norfolk, what think'st thou now?
Nor. That we shall conquer:—but on my tent,
This morning early, was this paper found.
K. Rich. (*Reads.*) "Jockey of Norfolk, be not so bold,
For Dickon, thy master, is bought and sold."
A weak invention of the enemy!
Come, gentlemen, now each man to his charge,
And, ere we do bestride our foaming steeds,
Remember whom you are to cope withal,
A scum of Bretons, rascals, runaways,
Whom their o'ercloyed country vomits forth
To desperate adventures, and destruction.—

O Long Flourish continued
till Discovery, next Re-
and do not
W
till Mr Booth is on stage
for discovery
Guards L H obliquely

Fig. 2. "And do not W[histle] 'till Mr. Booth is on stage for discovery." *MSS_BoothJW_Richard_III_034,* Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin

7 A stage management book of his own, which he could turn over to a local stage manager for the duration of a run, would allow Booth to expect consistency from one touring engagement to another, and he would have written the book with the knowledge that the person using it would be thinking of him as "Mr. Booth." But it seems equally likely that a stage manager, rather than Booth himself, created the book for Booth's use on the road. Moreover, the publicity around the Hidden Room's production seemed to imply something rather different – *acting* insights from a notorious historical figure – and those are nowhere to be found.[6]

8 Finally, one cannot (at least, I cannot) conclude a discussion of 19th-century stage management books without a mention of Herbert Beerbohm Tree's 1900 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Actor Fred Grove created what Charles Shattuck and the Folger Shakespeare Library term a "souvenir promptbook" documenting the show's famously realistic stage business. Grove interleaves a printed copy of the play with tipped-in paper so as to give himself room for extensive descriptions. At the beginning of Act 2, he records this charming description: "Curtain on last note of music. Owl hoots twice on introduction to song. Fairy child enters L, looks round, sees rabbit by tree L, pulls its tale [sic], exit rabbit behind tree."

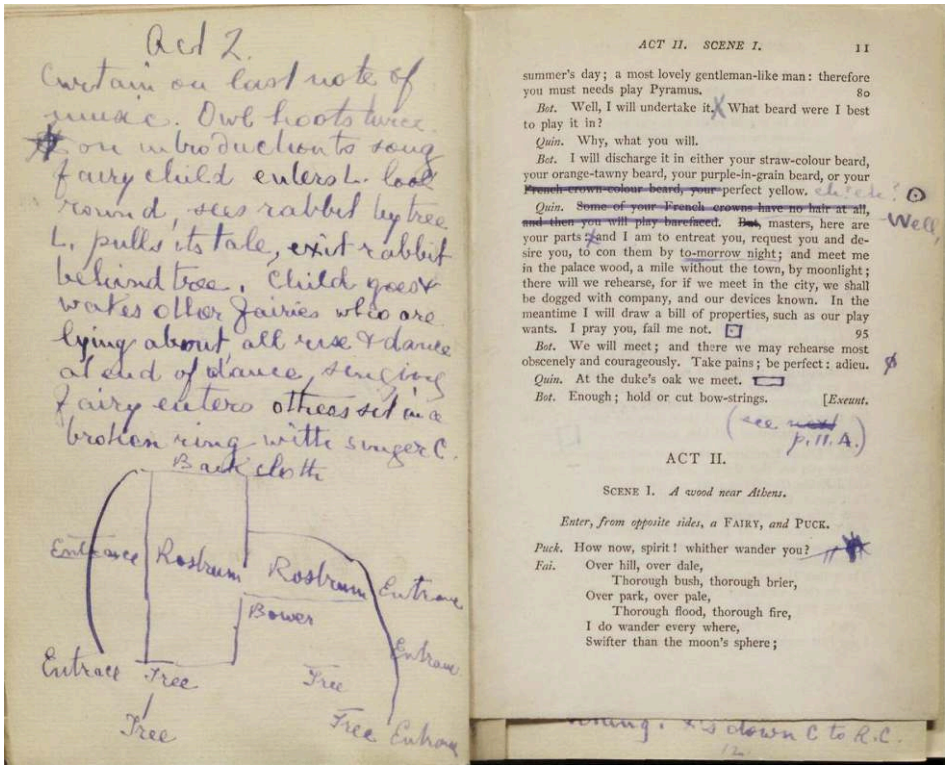


Fig. 3. "Exit rabbit." *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [Final or Souvenir Prompt Book]. At: Place: Folger Shakespeare Library. MND 7. Available through: Adam Matthew, Marlborough, Shakespeare in Performance: Prompt Books from the Folger Shakespeare Library, http://www.shakespeareinperformance.amdigital.co.uk.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/Documents/Details/FSL_A_MIDSUMMER_NIGHTS_DREAM_MND_7 [Accessed May 01, 2020].

9 Tree's own notebooks look rather different from the stage-manager-inspired book above. Directors' texts capture markedly different foci, and frequently look different as well, with pre-rehearsal blank books that lack the Shakespearean playtext entirely. Directors take a bird's-eye view of a play, giving consideration to all characters at once, as well as to the overall mood or look of a production. In 1911, Tree thought his way through an incipient production of *Macbeth*, in a blank notebook now in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum's Performing Arts Collection.[7] Tree includes in his notebook memories, anecdotes, and a seven-page draft of an essay on the play, bylined "July 1911, Marienbad." One of his memories is of the late Edward Godwin, partner of actress Ellen Terry: "Godwin read *Macbeth* to me [...] during a thunderstorm. It naturally heightened the effect of his reading and he would have made a fine actor. He always urged me to do *Hamlet*, *Falstaff*, and *King John* – had he lived he would have helped me with all. Ellen Terry told me she learned all her art from Godwin." For the first scene, he writes a short list, switching casually between to-do items and staging ideas:

> Flights of bats – two eagles
> Cottages on fire
> Get appropriate period fixed ...
> Emphasize soldier side of Macbeth
> Read Hazlitt on E. Kean
> Macbeth a physical hero + a moral coward

10 In his essay, he writes, "Lady M inflexible of will (iron) Macbeth with the supple imagination (steel) – she breaks – he bends." Certainly few viewers would have thought

of Lady Macbeth as brittle wrought iron to her husband's supple steel, but that notion, repeated several times in his notes, shaped Tree's production, and also beautifully evokes the industrial and architectural changes that were happening in the early 20th century, from Victorian wrought-iron gates and fences, beautiful but brittle, to lightweight, stronger modern steel skyscrapers. Tree's book is very much a director's text – conceptual and wide-ranging, frequently simply talking to himself on paper as he thinks through *Macbeth* and all the associations he has around it.

11 Glen Byam Shaw's notebooks for *Antony and Cleopatra* likewise range freely between memory, imagination, and anticipation. He first began his notes while serving in Burma during WWII, and resumed them as he prepared for his 1946 production starring Godfrey Tearle and Edith Evans. Across two completely-filled notebooks,[8] Shaw records his thoughts about every character. He seems to be writing both to himself and to an imagined audience: of Gallus, who has exactly two lines, Shaw quips, "I'm beat here, but I'll find him a character yet!" He devotes the rest of one notebook and the entirety of a second one to a section titled "Detail of Scenes," in which he carefully envisions each scene – positions, clothes, lights, music, emotional tone, even time of day and weather. Shaw's notes are novelistic in their detail, but he adds that "all this must move through the actors before it is real."

12 Sixty years later, Samuel West's director's script for *As You Like It* (2007 for the RSC) includes the same sort of individual descriptions of every character. West annotates his script heavily, with commentary on every line of this page.

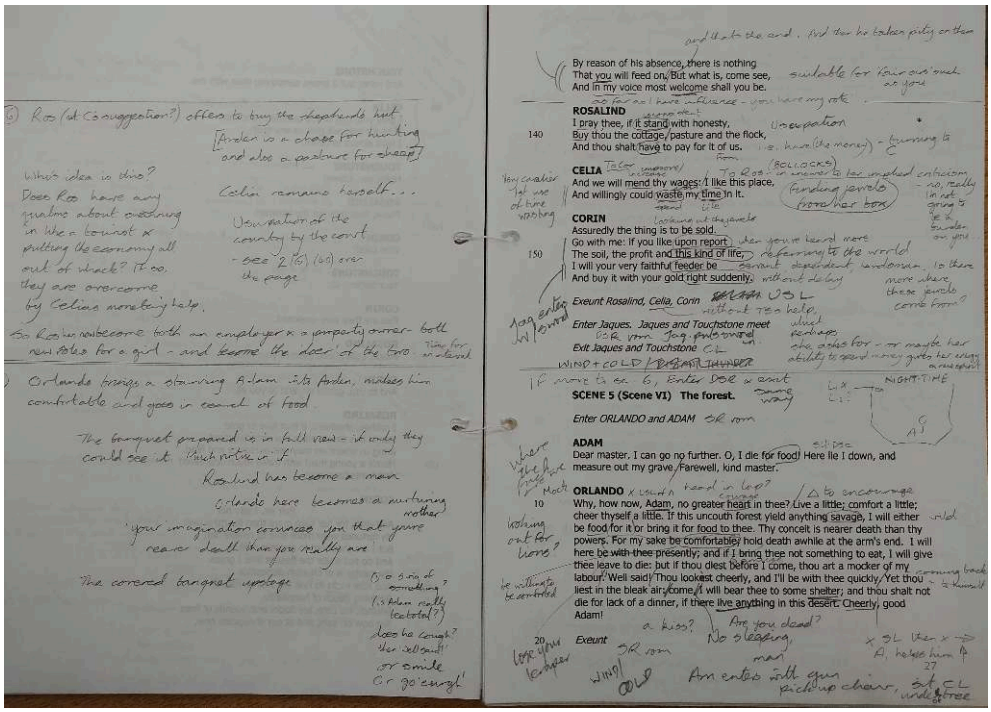


Fig. 4. Samuel West Director's Script, *As You Like It*, 2007, Shakespeare Institute Library, author's photo, taken March 23, 2018

13 His marks are typical of a director's over-arching vision: he notes blocking for most characters and makes a small sketch of the stage; he defines and clarifies words across several characters' lines; he paraphrases nearly the whole page; and he makes notes on the imagined weather (night, wind and cold). On the blank verso, he observes that as Rosalind's purchasing of property and becoming Corin's employer make her a man, so

Orlando at the same time, in an immediately adjoining scene, becomes a nurturing mother to Adam, by settling him to rest and seeking food to feed him. West also borrows for his own Shakespeare's words from later in the play, showing how actors and directors work to make Shakespeare's words literally their own. While commenting on the staging of the banquet, he writes "if only [Adam and Orlando] could see it," then adds wryly, "Much virtue in 'if'." In his actor's notebook for *Hamlet*, West will do the same thing with a line borrowed from a different play: as he considers the nunnery scene, the note he makes is a reversal of *Much Ado about Nothing*'s life-affirming tone: for the nunnery scene, he writes, "The world must *not* be peopled."

14 Robert Darnton, in his famous communications circuit,[9] originally left the circuit not quite closed, rendering the link between final reader and originating author as a dotted line and writing, "Inner appropriation – the ultimate stage in the communication circuit that linked authors and publishers with booksellers and readers may remain beyond the range of research."[10]

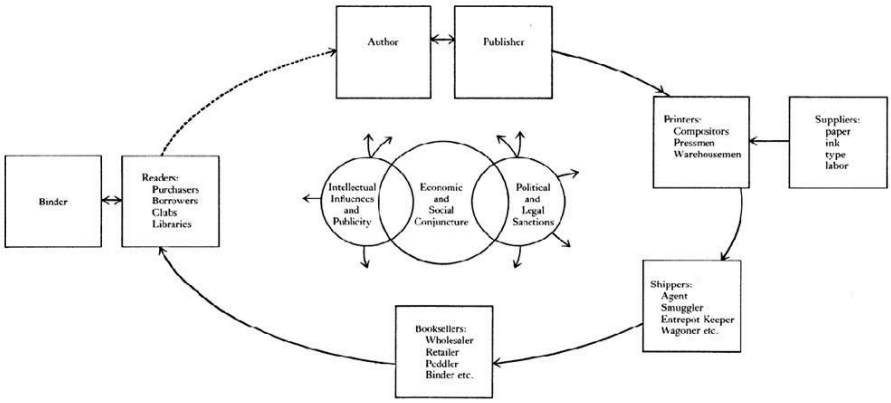


Figure 1. The Communications Circuit

Fig. 5. "The Communications Circuit," Robert Darnton [1982]

15 Actors close the circuit between reader and author: they are readers of the text who imaginatively *become* the author's characters. "Inner appropriation" is precisely the job of an actor. This intensely creative embodiment is a form of textual engagement unlike that of either an academic or a general reader, but it leaves little to no trace on Shakespeare's own text. What remains is only the performance itself, or the actors' annotations on her or his script. So it is perhaps telling that marginalia expert Heather Jackson reaches for a theatrical analogy when describing marginalia: "When the reader takes on the ***role*** of a writer and leaves traces in the book, the communication between reader and text necessarily involves not only their two ***speaking parts*** but also the silent ***audience*** that will sooner or later witness the ***performance***."[11]

16 Jackson suggests what conditions might create ideal marginalia: "association with greatness (or at least with fame), historical significance, and creative symbiosis."[12] Actors' marginalia on Shakespeare texts achieve all three conditions. Shakespeare playtexts plus actors' marginalia add up to a third text, greater than the sum of its parts, and it is that third, co-authored text that creates a performance. Moreover, backstage documents capture something that survives in no other form – not the

Shakespeare text, not reviews, not even videotapes of performance: what is captured is the fluidity of rehearsal, including preparatory research and discarded experiments that may never be seen on the stage but which, as Barbara Hodgdon puts it, nonetheless "become the thickness" of what audiences experience as a fully-realized performance.[13]

17 So what *are* actors' marginalia like? An actor generally records notes only about their own character, with no concern for technical detail other than their movement about the stage. There are few notes about any other actor except insofar as those actors directly affect the actor whose script is annotated. In archives, if you are looking at a script focused exclusively on one character, you are looking at an actor's script.[14] Canadian actress Amelia Hall played Emilia in a 1974 production of *Othello* at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario. Hall's scripts are unmistakably those of an actor. This heavily-marked portion of 3.3 in *Othello*, when Emilia gives Iago the handkerchief she has picked up from Desdemona, is worded partly as though it were in Emilia's own thoughts ("brilliant idea!"). You can also see how Hall notes physical blocking (her physical movement about the stage: "DR" [down right], "back up"), emotional tone ("playful," "more relaxed"), and also records a great deal of stage business that would be missing from any other record of this performance ("face lift," "skip," and "kiss").

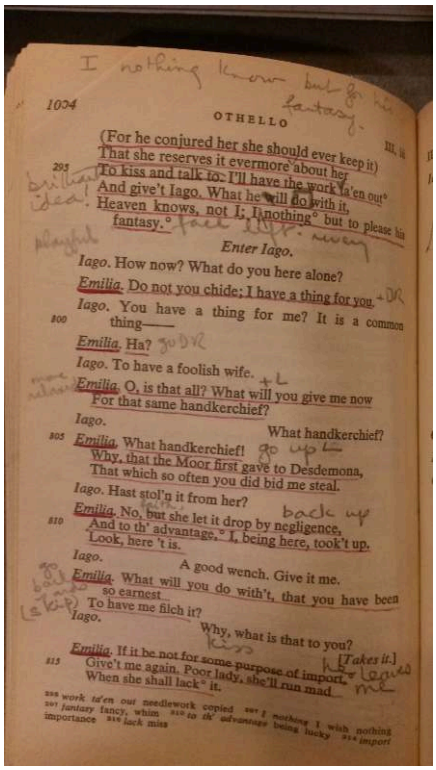


Fig. 6. Amelia Hall MSS Collection, Toronto Reference Library, Box 2, Envelope 12. Author's photo, taken November 2014

18 I especially want to call attention to Hall's marginal comment "Brilliant idea!" in the top left corner, because that comment has revealed to me that it is important for an academic not only to study actors' annotations, but to understand them in the context of production and actor training. I've pointed this comment out to scholars as an example of an actor actually thinking the character's thoughts, and several times, scholars have responded doubtfully with, "Well, maybe she's being sarcastic." That's a

fair reading of the moment: in a play full of bad ideas, Emilia stealing Desdemona's handkerchief is one of the worst. But I've also pointed out this marginal comment to actors in talking about my work, and not a single actor has ever believed that this comment is sarcastic – on the contrary, they know it is completely serious. Most types of actor training that deal with the text encourage actors to annotate in specific, goal-driven ways. That is, actors are trained, professional annotators, and if that training can be boiled down to a single principle, it is that everything you do needs to serve the production. Not only could sarcasm here be confusing as the actor goes back over her notes, but in any traditional staging of *Othello*, Emilia *does* believe that giving Desdemona's handkerchief to Iago is a brilliant idea, and an actor playing her needs to convince the audience of that belief.

19 Although annotation is a professional act, there is room for the actor's wit and personality to shine through. Ontario's Stratford Shakespeare Festival actor Brian Tree made extensive notes on his understudied role of Pisanio for a 2004 production of *Cymbeline*. In *Cymbeline's* notoriously revelation-filled final scene, Tree records a bit of marginal humor, which also offers a perfectly functional summary of the action.

> CYMBELINE. But her son
> Is gone, we know not how nor where.
> PISANIO. My lord,
> Now fear is from me, I'll speak truth. Lord Cloten,
> Upon my lady's missing, came to me
> With his sword drawn, foamed at the mouth, and swore,
> If I discovered not which way she was gone,
> It was my instant death. By accident
> I had a feignèd letter of my master's
> Then in my pocket, which directed him
> to seek her on the mountains near to Milford; [...]
> What became of him
> I further know not.
> 5.5.272-86

20 When Cymbeline wonders what became of the missing Cloten, Pisanio responds with a thirteen-line speech that explains the part of the story that he knows, but ends where Cloten and Pisanio part. Tree's summary is a response to Cymbeline's "we know not how nor where." Pisanio/Tree replies: "I do-ish." Actors' annotations may be idiosyncratic and charming, but they are not *merely* the actor's personal responses – rather, they are marks made by a professional at work. Tree's succinct – and funny – annotation illustrates the specificity of the actor's textual work: unlike the annotations of a director or a stage manager, an actor's annotations gesture toward their embodied action; that is, most of us can easily imagine the rueful shrug and hesitation that might have accompanied a response like "I do-ish." This is another reason why actors never believe that Amelia Hall's "Brilliant idea!" comment is sarcastic – while it could have that as an underlying response (Hall's own understanding that what Emilia thinks is brilliant is actually a tragic miscalculation), the comment taken straightforwardly offers an embodied gesture, a certain brightening up that physically communicates Emilia's internal thoughts to the audience.

21 When he acted Hamlet at the RSC in 2001, Samuel West gave himself extensive (and multiple, combined here) reading lists,[15] which nicely illustrate the wide range of an actor's research, from Greek tragedy to popular films to poetry to criticism to comic books.

Spanish Tragedy
Oresteia
Julius Caesar
Memento
Sixth Sense
Gilbert Murry, Hamlet & Orestes
Dr. Faustus (he went to Wittenberg)
"They fuck you up, your mum and dad"
Batman: Killing Joke
Fight Club
Machiavelli, The Prince
Ubu Roi
Bert States, Hamlet and the Concept of Character (1992)
Harry Levin, The Question of Hamlet (1959)
AC Bradley
Peter Mercer, Hamlet and the Acting of Revenge (1987)
Mary Maher, Modern Hamlets and Their Soliloquies (1992)
[Marvin] Rosenberg, The Masks of Hamlet (1992)

22 We cannot know whether West completed – or even began – this research,[16] other than that these are some of the potential influences he had in mind, but even in the act of listing them in his notebook, they become some of the "thickness" of his performance, and whether or not they are individually visible in West's characterization of Hamlet, one can see how each item on the list above has something to offer, something to say to the play *Hamlet* or to an aspiring Hamlet – even the pop-culture ones (Hamlet, too, sees dead people). Yet without the saving of West's notebook in the archives of the Shakespeare Institute, knowledge of this preparation would have been lost. No reviewer could have identified all these influences, even an interviewer asking about research probably could not have teased out the complete list from West, and certainly almost none of it can be gleaned from reading *Hamlet*.

23 Discussing early modern typecasting, Tiffany Stern writes, "Different plays performed by the same company at about the same time hold hands with one another: an actor's character-traits and verbal tricks can be seen to follow through from one part to another over plays."[17] In his notebook, West makes a wonderfully *actorly* comment about Hamlet: Hamlet thinks he's Hal, only to find out that he isn't Henry V material at all. An actor who is being considered for Hamlet is a young lead, which means he's certainly being considered for – or has already played – Hal as well. West imagines the two roles "holding hands" with one another in a perverse way, and he imagines a Shakespearean canon that has a few other plays. Somewhere deep inside Hamlet's (fictitious) mind, which exists in a world in which there are Shakespeare plays, West imagines Hamlet imagining that he's Hal, that his father has died and that he will slide into the throne and be a big hero like Henry V, only that's not what happens. He doesn't get that part. It's a marvelous layering of playwright and actor and character, all intertwined with one another, as made clear by the shift from "Hamlet" to "I":

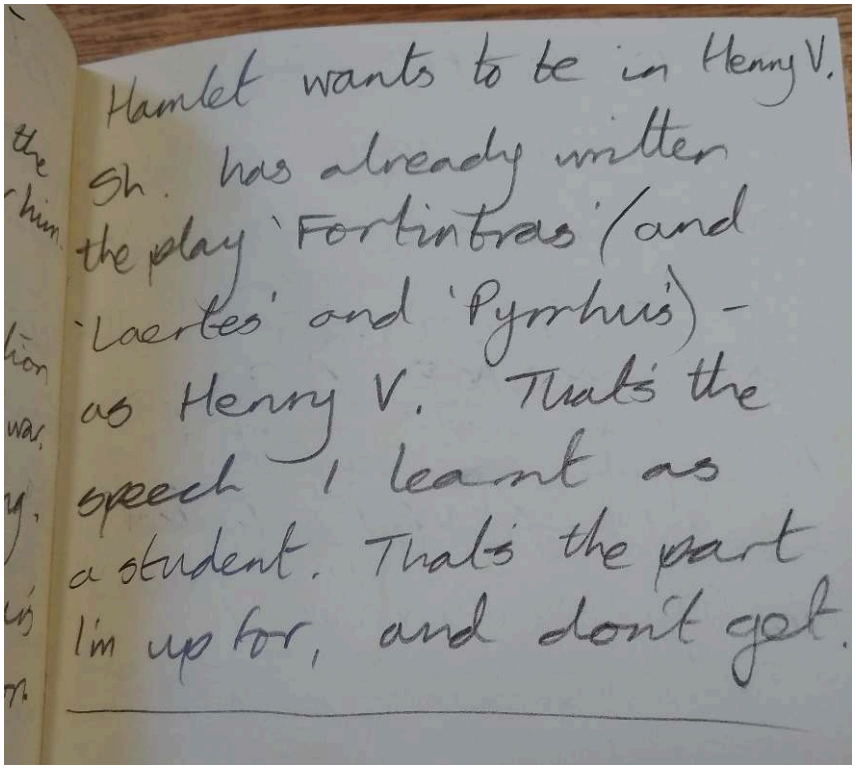


Fig. 7. "Hamlet wants to be in *Henry V.* Sh. has already written the play 'Fortinbras' (and 'Laertes' and 'Pyrrhus') – as *Henry V*. That's the speech I learnt as a student. That's the part I'm up for, and don't get." Samuel West's *Hamlet* notebook, Shakespeare Institute.

24 When actors annotate a script, they are trying to map themselves onto the character and vice versa – trying to find points of connection, literally corresponding with and to their character. They engage in private conversations between themselves and Shakespeare, a textual duet out of which their performance will emerge. They are taking ownership of the page and thus the text on it, writing themselves into the text. They are, like physical scripts themselves, interleaving themselves with the text and the character. David Bellwood, an actor at the Globe, says, "In theatre, a script is always an object of the future"[18] – words that will be said, things that will be done. When they mark their scripts in rehearsal, actors enact this future over and over, tinkering, polishing, fine-tuning, making records for and of a performance that hasn't happened yet, and annotations capture some of that work.

25 Working theatrical scripts of Shakespeare are a kind of "paradoxical edition." They are like an edition in that choices are made between Folio and quarto versions; some (though not necessarily all) cruxes are solved for the purposes of the performance; lines are annotated; and unclear words or passages are made clear, via performance choices rather than a gloss. These same texts are paradoxical in that they aspire to ephemerality, fully intended to melt away at the close of a production; never to be read except by a select few; never to be printed; never to be used pedagogically; and not even to be re-used by the same theatre company for later productions of the same play on the same stage. To return to Menzer's thought experiment: what does an edition look like that aspires to ephemerality? It looks like an actor's script. What does a performance look like that aspires to permanence? It is the imagined one in the head of a Shakespearean editor, often an averaging-out of all the performances they've seen, researched, or read about: it aspires to permanence by finding its way into printed

stage directions, but often it isn't a real performance at all, and that brings me to the way that I believe backstage theatrical documents can be most useful – as material for a new way of editing Shakespeare.

26 Editors imagine, primarily, that they are guiding readers through the text by helping them to imagine it being staged; and secondarily, that they are helping theatre practitioners to stage the play. I suggest that the polarity can work in the opposite direction as well, indeed may work even *better*: incorporating the work of practitioners might help scholars to edit plays in new ways, more useful to actors and directors as well as more imaginatively compelling for readers. Modern performance can teach us not about Renaissance plays, but about modern editing. Mine is a project about how text is imagined into performance (by actors and directors) and how performance is imagined into text (by editors).

27 Barbara Hodgdon asks why editors continue to reproduce historical stage directions going back as far as Nicholas Rowe's early eighteenth-century edition of Shakespeare. Considering that stage directions, however directly or indirectly, describe the movement of an actor's body onstage, this leaves modern editors re-creating, for modern readers, eighteenth-century acting styles and stage business – a fact that is never made clear to those readers. Hodgdon derides this practice as "anti-theatrical to modern performance" and calls for a new protocol for stage directions, suggesting, "Whatever that 'new' commentary may look like, it will have a different grammar."[19] M.J. Kidnie also theorizes the editorial production of stage directions, describing the practice as "theatre of the mind... a process by which the script is systematically shaped to create for the reader a specifically modern and, for this reason, accessible virtual performance."[20] The virtual performance she refers to is the one that the editor helps to create in the reader's imagination, but it is also, troublingly, only a virtual performance in the editor's mind as well.

28 Traditionally, editors have had two options for translating performance into text: one, echo the work of previous editors and rely on the historical consensus regarding which lines might be asides and when – and how – stage business occurs, a practice which focuses on the theatrical past; or two, imagine themselves as directors and "stage" the play on the page, suggesting editorial annotations like stage business or asides according to their own directorial instincts, however untrained, unpracticed, or limited those instincts might be, but which are at least focused on a possible theatrical future. Both are intended to help readers through the text, specifically by helping them to imagine it as though it were being staged. The two methods of handling stage directions renders actors both visible and invisible – an actor and the movement of her or his body is imagined, but no specific actor, no specific production, and there is no acknowledgement that what editors are doing is either imagining a nonexistent performance, or they are reproducing an action that was both created by an actor (although, as Hodgdon points out, frequently *not* a modern one, but rather an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century actor) and also originally recorded by that actor, in script annotations. What editors are generally doing is reproducing the work not of real actors at all – certainly not actors they are capable of naming – but rather of earlier editors and completely imaginary actors.

29 When editors act as page-bound directors, I would argue that they tend to average out the play they are editing – all the productions they've personally attended, from student to professional level; plus all the movie versions and other adaptations; plus

reviews they've read of influential productions they did not see; plus historical accounts. They may consult actors' memoirs or the *Shakespeare in Production* series. They certainly examine and consider the work of past editors. This is conscientious work, involving extensive research. But in the end, everything is flattened out into what happens in, for instance, a "typical" *Romeo and Juliet*. Flat, typical, average – in other words, what winds up being reproduced on the page is the most ***mediocre*** production possible. If editors create stage directions based on a standout production that moved them and stayed with them, then ***why aren't they identifying it***? Moreover, while there is an assumption that multiple, conflated, historical, and/or imagined productions help readers through a text, this belief has never been interrogated or proven to be true, especially not when compared to well-known, recent performances. I believe that Shakespeare scholars can do better. Editors owe it to readers to be much more transparent about what lies behind those bracketed, editorial stage directions. Actors' marginalia, directors' notebooks, and other backstage documents represent the largest, best repository of modern theatre in production, a rich vein waiting to be mined by editors, and a better alternative to imagined or historical stage business. My proposed solution is for an editor to have a few specific, recent productions in mind when producing an edition of a play and to use those performances as an explicitly-stated basis of her or his editing.[21]

30 In some ways, this is a kind of return to performance editions, as it would be based on contemporary production, but performance editions never included cutting-edge scholarship. What I envision is an edition that merges performance and scholarship in order to help readers both to imagine the text and to understand it. Editions based on modern production will seem to age quickly – Peter Brook observed that even gestures become dated and productions can only "live" for about five years or so.[22] But scholarship progresses quickly as well – by the time such an edition begins to feel dated, its acting stars too faded to be of use to students' imaginations, new scholarship will be ready to help interpret a new edition.

31 All of this depends on the preservation of backstage documents in archives – not only stage managers' texts, but especially directors' and actors' texts. Ultimately, every actor's script records a unique interaction between a singular creative mind and a complicated, potentially intimidating text. Yet scripts have always been and still are ephemera. That's part of my passion for this project: we have only a few tiny scraps of early modern roles, out of the thousands of roles that circulated. But even today far too few scripts are saved — the papers of most journeyman actors from smaller companies around the world are discarded when the actor dies, retires, or even merely declutters. I want them to have a wider life than that. They are almost never mined for actors' insights or evidence of their process, and as a result we have lost — ***and continue to lose*** — the potential lessons of four hundred years of theatre.

32 The job of theatre is to make writing vanish. All of the numerous and varied texts produced in the theatre — the director's book, the stage manager's book, and most importantly, the actors' scripts and the playwright's text — vanish in the act of performance, which takes words from the page and puts them in the mouth. In scholarly terms, much of that disappearing act has been allowed to stand. My goal is to undo it, to make visible and to study the theatrical texts that are obscured by performance. They constitute our only archive of the process of interpreting

Shakespeare, an archive of theatre as it is made, and they show us how performance became literature and how literature continually returns to performance.

NOTES

1. Personal conversation, circa 2012.

2. See Tiffany Stern's extensive and influential work: *Making Shakespeare: From Stage to Page*, London, Routledge, 2004; *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009; and *Rethinking Theatrical Documents in Shakespeare's England*, London, The Arden Shakespeare, 2020. See also William B. Long, "'Precious Few': English Manuscript Playbooks," *A Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. David Scott Kastan, Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999; Stephen Orgel, *The Reader in the Book: A Study of Places and Traces*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015; Paul Werstine, *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts and the Editing of Shakespeare*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

3. Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great*, London, Robert Ihones, 1590, sig. A2r.

4. Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher Gentlemen. Never printed before, And now published by the Authors Originall Copies*, London, Humphrey Robinson and Humphrey Moseley, 1647, sig. A4r.

5. The entire text is digitized and available via the Harry Ransom Center at: https://hrc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15878coll67/id/195

6. To be fair, the Hidden Room director Beth Burns accurately refers to Booth as an actor/director, but even then the book here has only stage management instructions – a comparison of Booth's text to that of H. Beerbohm Tree's director's notebook for *Macbeth* (discussed below), full of interpretations, casting ideas, and overarching vision, shows the differences between the two.

7. Herbert Beerbohm Tree and Family Collection, V&A Theatre and Performance Collections, THM/160/3.

8. Michael Mullin Collection of Glen Byam Shaw, Royal Shakespeare Company Archives, Box 6, item 11.

9. Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Books?" *Daedalus* 111.3 (Summer 1982): 65-83, p. 68.

10. Qtd. in Heather Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2001, p. 254-255.

11. Jackson, *op. cit*, p. 95. Emphasis added.

12. Jackson, *op. cit*., p. 231-232.

13. Barbara Hodgdon, *Shakespeare, Performance, and the Archive*, New York, Routledge, 2016, p. 11. See also William N. West, "Intertheatricality," *Early Modern Theatricality*, ed. Henry S. Turner, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 151-172.

14. One exception to this is when a theatre company practices role doubling, in which case an actor will mark both their parts on the same script, often highlighting lines for each respective character in a different color or making some other visual distinction between them.

15. This list is compiled from multiple partial lists in Samuel West's *Hamlet* notebook, Shakespeare Institute.

16. Shakespeare Institute director and friend of West's Michael Dobson assures me that West indeed completed this research.

17. Tiffany Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 15. See also William N. West's notion of intertheatricality, which also argues that gestures, phrases, actions, and props have cross-play referents and significance, layering all the accrued meanings into one another.
18. David Bellwood, during a workshop at Shakespeare Theatre Conference, Stratford, ON, 23 June 2017.
19. Barbara Hodgdon, "New Collaborations with Old Plays: the (textual) politics of performance commentary," in *Textual Performances: The Modern Reproduction of Shakespeare's Drama*, Lukas Erne and Margaret Jane Kidnie, editors, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, 210-223, p. 216-220.
20. M. J. Kidnie, "Text, Performance, and the Editors: Staging Shakespeare's Drama," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 51.4, Winter, 2000, 456-473, p. 465-66.
21. It is certainly true that editing has recently trended toward being more performance-minded, with many editions now incorporating images from stage and screen and performance histories in their paratextual material. But these are still used mostly anecdotally and illustratively, rather than being incorporated into a systematic effort to tie recent editing to recent theatre history and to guide readers through a single, coherent exemplar of performance.
22. Peter Brook, *The Empty Space*, New York, Atheneum, 1968, p. 16.

ABSTRACTS

Theatre makes its backstage texts – including the playwright's script – disappear, subsumed into a seemingly real history or tragedy or comedy, or at least into an evening of shared imaginative play between actor and audience. And yet not so, for with a text 'twas made. My goal is to undo this vanishing act, to make visible and to study the theatrical texts that are obscured by performance. They constitute our only archive of the process of interpreting Shakespeare. Backstage theatrical documents, from early modern to present-day, represent not the polished production, but living, working theatre, captured mid-creation. Considering how thoroughly backstage documents are hidden from the staged performance and from the textual and even the theatrical history of Shakespeare's plays, it might be surprising how extensive they are – and, unfortunately, how few of them survive in archives. Actors' marginalia, in particular, capture uniquely creative minds meeting uniquely challenging roles, at a unique moment in time, and textualizing that meeting. I argue here for their value, for their preservation, and for a new idea of their use for scholars: as the basis for an approach to editing more reflective of modern theatrical practice and more engaging for readers.

Le théâtre fait disparaître les coulisses du texte, y compris le script du dramaturge, en les incorporant à une histoire, une tragédie ou une comédie apparemment réelle, ou du moins à une soirée où acteurs et spectateurs partagent un jeu d'imagination. Mais pas tout à fait, car c'est bien à partir d'un texte que tout cela a été fait. Mon but, dans cet article, est de montrer la face invisible et d'étudier ces textes théâtraux éclipsés par la représentation. Ils constituent la seule archive que nous ayons du processus d'interprétation des pièces de Shakespeare. Les documents de coulisses, de la période pré-moderne à nos jours, représentent non pas la mise en scène policée, mais le théâtre vivant, à l'œuvre, saisi dans sa genèse. Etant donné que les documents de coulisses sont entièrement soustraits de la représentation scénique, ainsi que de l'histoire

textuelle, voire théâtrale, des pièces de Shakespeare, on pourrait être surpris par leur importance et, malheureusement, par leur rareté dans les archives. Les annotations marginales d'acteurs, en particulier, nous permettent de saisir ce moment unique où des esprits créatifs exceptionnels rencontrent des rôles qui posent des défis exceptionnels, et donnent une existence textuelle à cette rencontre. Je défends ici l'idée que ces textes ont une grande valeur, qu'il faut les préserver et que les spécialistes doivent les utiliser d'une nouvelle manière : telle doit être la base d'une approche nouvelle de l'édition scientifique, qui doit mieux refléter une pratique moderne du théâtre et associer les lecteurs.

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Keywords: Keywords: actor training, book history, editing, marginalia, performance, rehearsal, textual history
Mots-clés: Mots clefs: formation d'acteur, histoire du livre, édition scientifique, notes marginales, représentation théâtrale, répétition de théâtre, histoire textuelle

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